THE

RAMBLER.

Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri,
Quo me cunque rapit tempestas, deferor hospes.

HOR.

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THE

RAMBLER.

NUMB. 35. TUESDAY *July* 17, 1750.

> ——— *Non pronuba* Juno,
> *Non* Hymenæus *adest, non illi* Gratia *lecto.*
>
> OVID.

To the RAMBLER.

SIR,

AS you have hitherto delayed the performance of the promise, by which you gave us reason to hope for another paper upon matrimony, I imagine you desirous of collecting more materials than your own experience, or observation, can supply; and I shall therefore lay candidly before you an account of my own entrance into the conjugal state.

I WAS about eight and twenty years old, when, having tried the diversions of the town till I began to be weary, and being awakened into some attention to more serious business,

by the failure of an attorney to whom I had implicitly trufted the conduct of my fortune, I refolved to take my eftate into my own care, and methodife my whole life according to the ftricteft rules of œconomical prudence.

In perfuance of this fcheme, I took leave of my acquaintance, who difmiffed me with numberlefs jefts upon my new fyftem; but firft endeavoured to divert me from a defign fo little worthy of a man of wit, by ridiculous accounts of the ignorance and rufticity into which many had funk in their retirement, after having diftinguifhed themfelves for fome years in taverns and play-houfes, and given hopes of rifing to uncommon eminence among the gay part of mankind.

When I came firft into the country, which, by a neglect not uncommon among young heirs, I had never feen fince the death of my father, I found every thing in fuch confufion, that, being utterly without practice in bufinefs, I had great difficulties to encounter in difentangling the perplexity of my circumftances; they however, at laft, gave way to diligent application, and I foon perceived that the advantage of keeping my own accounts

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would very much over-balance the time which they could require.

I HAD now viſited all my tenants, ſurveyed all my land, and repaired the old houſe, which, for ſome years, had been running to decay. Theſe proofs of pecuniary wiſdom began to recommend me, as a ſober, judicious, thriving gentleman, to all my graver neighbours of the country, who never failed to celebrate my management in oppoſition to *Thriftleſs* and *Latterwit*, two ſmart fellows, who had eſtates in the ſame part of the kingdom, which they viſited now and then in a frolick, to take up their rents beforehand, debauch a milk-maid, make a feaſt for the village, and tell ſtories of their own intrigues, and then rode poſt back to town to ſpend their money.

IT was doubtful, however, for ſome time, whether I ſhould be able to hold my reſolution; but a ſhort perſeverance removed all ſuſpicions. I roſe every day in reputation, by the decency of my converſation, and the regularity of my conduct, and was mentioned with great regard at the aſſizes, as a man very fit to be put in commiſſion for the peace.

During the confuſion of my affairs, and the daily neceſſity of viſiting farms, adjuſting contracts, letting leaſes, and ſuper-intending repairs, together with the civilities, which were at my firſt arrival to be paid or returned, I found very little vacuity in my life, and therefore had not many thoughts of marriage; but, in a little while, the tumult of buſineſs ſubſided, and the exact method which I had eſtabliſhed, enabled me to diſpatch my accounts with great facility; I had, therefore, now upon my hands, the taſk of finding means to ſpend my time, without falling back into the poor amuſements which I had hitherto indulged, or changing them for the ſports of the field, which I ſaw perſued with ſo much eagerneſs by the gentlemen of the country, that they were indeed the only pleaſures in which I could promiſe myſelf any partaker.

The inconvenience of this ſituation naturally diſpoſed me to wiſh for a companion, and the known value of my eſtate, with my reputation for frugality and prudence, eaſily gained me admiſſion into every family; for I ſoon found that no enquiry was made after any other virtue, nor any teſtimonial neceſſary,

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ry, but, of my freedom from incumbrances, and my care of what they termed the *main chance*. I confeſs I could not ſee, without ſome indignation, the eagerneſs with which the daughters, wherever I came, were ſet out to ſhow; nor could I conſider them in a ſtate much different from proſtitution, when I found them ordered to play their airs before me, and to exhibit, by ſome ſeeming chance, ſpecimens of their muſick, their work, or their houſewifery. No ſooner was I placed at table, than the young lady was called upon to pay me ſome civility or other; nor could I find means of eſcaping, from either father or mother, ſome account of their daughter's excellencies, with a declaration, that they were now leaving the world, and had no buſineſs on this ſide the grave, but to ſee their children happily diſpoſed of; that ſhe whom I had been pleaſed to compliment at table, was indeed the chief pleaſure of their age, ſo good, ſo dutiful, ſo great a relief to her mamma in the care of the houſe, and ſo much her pappa's favourite for her chearfulneſs and wit, that it would be with the laſt reluctance that they ſhould part; but to a worthy gentleman in the neighbourhood, whom they might often viſit, they would not ſo far conſult their own gratification,

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as to refuse her; and their tenderness should be shewn in her fortune, when ever a suitable settlement was proposed.

As I knew these overtures not to proceed from any preference of me before another equally rich, I could not but look with pity on young persons condemned to be set to auction, and made cheap by injudicious commendations; for how could they know themselves offered and rejected a hundred times, without some loss of that soft elevation, and maiden dignity, so necessary to the completion of female excellence?

I SHALL not trouble you with a history of the stratagems practised upon my judgment, or the allurements tried upon my heart, which, if you have, in any part of your life, been acquainted with rural politicks, you will easily conceive. Their arts have no great variety, they think nothing worth their care but money, and supposing its influence the same upon all the world, seldom endeavour to deceive by any other means than false computations.

I WILL not deny that, by hearing myself loudly commended for my discretion, I began

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to ſet ſome value upon my character, and was unwilling to loſe my credit by marrying for love. I therefore reſolved to know the fortune of the lady whom I ſhould addreſs, before I enquired after her wit, delicacy, or beauty.

THIS determination led me to Mitiſſa, the daughter of Chryſophilus, whoſe perſon was at leaſt without deformity, and whoſe manners were free from reproach, as ſhe had been bred up at a diſtance from all common temptations. To Mitiſſa, therefore, I obtained leave from her parents to pay my court, and was referred by her again to her father, whoſe direction ſhe was reſolved to follow. The queſtion then was, only, what ſhould be ſettled. The old gentleman made an enormous demand, with which I refuſed to comply. Mitiſſa was ordered to exert her power; ſhe told me, that if I could refuſe her papa, I had no love for her; that ſhe was an unhappy creature, and that I was a perfidious man: then ſhe burſt into tears, and fell into fits. All this, as I was no paſſionate lover, had little effect. She next refuſed to ſee me, and becauſe I thought myſelf obliged to write in terms of diſtreſs, they had once hopes of ſtarving me into meaſures; but finding me inflexible, the father complied;

with my propoſal, and told me he liked me the more for being ſo good at a bargain.

I WAS now married to Mitiſſa, and was to experience the happineſs of a match made without paſſion. Mitiſſa ſoon diſcovered, that ſhe was equally prudent with myſelf, and had taken a huſband only to be at her own command, and to have a chariot at her own call. She brought with her an old maid recommended by her mother, who taught her all the arts of domeſtick management, and was, on every occaſion, her chief agent and directreſs. They ſoon invented one reaſon or other, to quarrel with all my ſervants, and either prevailed on me to turn them away, or treated them ſo ill, they left me of themſelves, and always ſupplied their places with ſome brought from her own relations. Thus they eſtabliſhed a family, over which I had no authority, and which was in a perpetual conſpiracy againſt me; for Mitiſſa conſidered herſelf as having a ſeparate intereſt, and thought nothing her own, but what ſhe laid up without my knowledge. For this reaſon ſhe brought me falſe accounts of the expences of the houſe, joined with my tenants in complaints of hard times, and by means of a ſteward of

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her own, took rewards for ſoliciting abatements of the rent. Her great hope is to outlive me, that ſhe may enjoy what ſhe has thus accumulated, and therefore ſhe is always contriving ſome improvements of her jointure land, and once tried to procure an injunction to hinder me from felling timber upon it for repairs. Her father and mother aſſiſt her in her projects, and are frequently hinting that ſhe is ill uſed, and reproaching me with the preſents that other ladies receive from their huſbands.

SUCH, Sir, was my ſituation for ſeven years, till at laſt my patience was exhauſted, and having one day invited her father to my houſe, I laid the ſtate of my affairs before him, detected my wife in ſeveral of her frauds, turned out her ſteward, charged a conſtable with her maid, took my buſineſs in my own hands, reduced her to a ſettled allowance, and now write this account to warn others againſt marrying thoſe whom they have no reaſon to eſteem.

I am, &c.